

# Soviet Answer to 'The Spy Who Came in From the Cold'

By Anatole Shub

MOSCOW — Dead Season, a Leningrad Films production directed by young Savva Kulish, appears to be the Soviet answer to 'The Spy Who Came in From the Cold.' It is a new type of Soviet espionage film in that its characters are not drawn in black and white. Even the heroes have their weaknesses. For the first time, the Soviet agent-hero gets caught.

Prefaced by a spoken introduction by an authentic agent, Col. Rudolf Ivanovich Abel, the "Brooklyn photographer" exchanged for U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers, the film is supposed to be loosely based on the career of the longtime Soviet "resident" or station chief in Britain, Gordon Lonsdale.

The film's hero, "Lonsfield," is effectively portrayed by Donatas Banionis in a low key and emerges as a kind of Lithuanian Glenn Ford.

The film is part of the continuing public relations effort in recent years on behalf of the Committee on State Security to portray that Agency as a modern, civilized organization of quiet, dedicated specialists defending the country against grim foreign plots.

In "The Dead Season," their problem is to locate and deter a former Nazi scientist engaged at a secret British seaside laboratory in developing a mysterious nerve gas called RII.

Although the film is often slow-moving, the Soviet moviegoer is provided not only with a view of the legendary Colonel Abel but with shots of the Lubyanka KGB headquarters, showing impressive banks of comput-

ers and decoders as well as numerous sequences of Britain obviously filmed on location.

A major complaint of many local movie buffs since the Stalin era has been that nearly all scenes representing the West were clearly filmed in recognizable areas around Moscow, Leningrad or Kiev.

In the Soviet agent's struggle with various Western intelligence operatives, only one West German agent emerges as a cliché villain. The scientist, himself, is a kind of evil genius — super-rational, articulate, poised, responsive to baroque music (supplied for the film by its foremost Russian interpreter, Andrei Volkonski).

The American agent who duels with "Lonsfield" before and after his capture is a quiet, stolid detective doing his job—portrayed not very differently than J. Edgar Hoover, if not necessarily Richard Helms, might wish him to be. And the laconic British police inspector who watches all the spies swarming around the mysterious "Institute of Pharmacology" is indistinguishable from counterparts in a hundred J. Arthur Rank Productions. An anguished British clergyman completes the array of credible Western figures.

Although the scenario by Vladimir Vladimirov and Alexander Shlepanov is not completely free of propaganda, several interesting dialogues create a sense of cool professionalism on both sides of the Cold War.

Cameraman Alexander Chechl is especially effective in a series of closing montages showing "Lonsfield" being interrogated, asked to defect, and finally exchanged (at a place resembling the Berlin Meadows before the Wall was built) for a Western agent.

There are few of the technical or sexual gimmicks of Ian Fleming or Len Deighton in "The Dead Season," but given local political inhibitions, the film shows that at least a few Soviet filmmakers, and probably some KGB executives as well, have been impressed by John Le Carre.

CIA 402 U-2

CIA 101 Helms, Richard  
Abel, Rudolf